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# disques

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# disques

## FOR NOVEMBER 1932

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H. ROYER SMITH COMPANY, PUBLISHERS, PHILADELPHIA  
RICHARD J. MAGRUDER, EDITOR      EDWARD C. SMITH, ART EDITOR





"GRAMOPHONES: Acoustic and Radio" is the title of a book recently issued in England by the publishers of *The Gramophone*. It is a good book, carefully prepared and full of sound, useful information that will be of considerable value to owners of phonographs. So little information of this sort is generally available that collectors ought to be grateful to G. Wilson, the compiler of the volume, for arranging his material so conveniently and simply. But quite aside from its general excellence, the volume furnishes vivid evidence of the immense differences that separate the American and English record-buying publics. Such a book could not be published in this country—at least not profitably, for a sufficient number of readers to justify the expense of preparing and printing it would be well-nigh impossible to find over here. The American record-buying public is a comparatively small one, and the proportion of it that would consciously heed or pay any serious attention to or even, in fact, take the slightest interest in the advice set forth so admirably in "Gramophones: Acoustic and Radio" would be infinitesimal indeed. But in England, though we have no figures on the matter, the chances are that "Gramophones: Acoustic and Radio" is probably enjoying a brisk sale, and its suggestions and hints are no doubt causing heated debates, discussions and experiments.

The English, as everybody knows, approach their gramophones with extraordinary seriousness; nothing even remotely connected with the instrument escapes their close attention and interest. Cabinet, turntable, pick-up (or, more frequently, sound-box), loud speaker (likewise more frequently, tone-chamber or horn)—these are tremendously important matters to the English record collector. They occupy a vast amount of his time and thought, and discussions of them are carried on with unflagging vigor and gusto. This passion for small mechanical details, once so familiar in this country through the antics of automobile owners, is somewhat puzzling to the rank and file of Americans, who commonly are content to own a phonograph without knowing more about it than how it starts and stops and the quality of its reproduction. If, as once in a great while happens, the reproduction is good they are gratified; if poor, as is usually the case, they accept the situation calmly and philosophically, finding a certain amount of comfort in the dubious fact that otherwise the machine appears to be a pretty good one. As for improving that reproduction, they are not vitally interested—not, at least, unless someone offers to do it for them at little or no expense or inconvenience. But an Englishman will spend countless hours patiently experimenting with new soundboxes and needles,



eternally hopeful of at last discovering the magic formula that will give him perfect reproduction.

Unquestionably there is much to be said both for and against the American and English attitudes. Where the American is careless and indifferent in the extreme, treating the instrument as if it were nothing more than a collection of wood, wire and tubes, the Englishman is constantly prying into his gramophone, as enchanted as a father is in his son's new electric train. If the one has to put up with mediocre reproduction, the other can scarcely have time to enjoy any reproduction at all. Encountering a collector whose conversation runs mainly to governors, needle-track alignment, turntable mats, a new method for washing records, an effective solution in which to "dope" fibres, or a wonderful new needle that, though it requires several hours and infinite delicacy to sharpen, nevertheless gives pretty good results,—meeting such a person one is justified in suspecting that his interest and enthusiasm proceed more from a fascination in mechanical things than from a love for music.



The American's lack of interest in his machine, however, is not without its disadvantages, and they are substantial ones. They are most fully and sadly revealed, perhaps, in the dismal fact that nine times out of ten his machine is a very poor one, and that it is so is largely his own fault. This curious apathy of the American public, its supreme indifference to the mediocre stuff that it accepts as the latest masterpiece of radio science, is principally responsible for the astonishing number of inferior models that appear each season bearing always longer and more imposing names but giving the same bad reproduction. These machines represent the public demand, and the manufacturers can scarcely be blamed for catering to it. Whether the reverse holds true and the Englishman's machine is nine times out of ten very good, we cannot say. Judging from the machines we have heard of the few American collectors whose passion for experimenting approached the fervor of the Englishman's, however, we suspect that it is not. The results of their dabbling—with one notable exception—were not noticeably pleasant to the ear. Amateur toying with phonographs, whether electrical or acoustical, seldom produces any improvements, and not infrequently, indeed, it produces much worse results than the machine ordinarily would give were it not tampered with.

In England acoustical machines are still highly esteemed, and it is not uncommon to hear them spoken of over there as being immensely superior to electrical machines. "Gramophones: Acoustic and Radio" takes a more cautious and reasonable attitude than is reflected in most English opinions. "The best gramophones," it says, "give a certain delicacy, refinement and compactness of tone that is missing from at any rate most radio-grams." It then very sensibly points out that unless one has electricity in the house it is less expensive and troublesome to own an acoustical machine and that the latter will not get out of order nearly so often as electrical machines will.

But the more general English opinion—at least in so far as it can be gauged several thousands of miles away—seems to be that acoustical machines still have the edge on electric machines. Does this indicate that English electrical machines are inferior to American electrical machines? Or does it suggest that acoustical machines

over there have been developed to a point undreamed of in America? Not having heard any English machines, we cannot say. The curiously shaped acoustical machines that are so highly lauded in England are not manufactured in America. One suspects, however, that a good electrical machine is much better than a good acoustical machine, and that the best electrical machines are infinitely superior to the best acoustical machine ever heard of.



Unfortunately, very few of us are able to enjoy either the best electrical or the best acoustical reproduction. Since the introduction of the former method of reproduction, the manufacturers have ceased producing acoustical models, and the few that are available in this country represent no improvement on the very early models. Unless we are experts and are able to build our own instruments or are very wealthy and so can have a competent engineer do it for us, we are compelled to select one or another of the commercial machines. These are seldom as good as they ought to be. Equipped with numerous enthusiastically advertised but essentially meaningless features, no doubt highly useful to the salesman and fascinating to the average indiscriminating buyer, they will do almost everything except that which the record collector wants them to do: reproduce his records satisfactorily.

It is a thousand pities that some manufacturer doesn't make up a few good electrical phonographs (unincumbered with radio, automatic record-changing devices, fancy cabinets, and the many other features that, to the record collector seeking only good reproduction, serve principally to increase the cost of the machine) at a reasonable price. By reasonable we do not necessarily mean cheap. Let them be expensive if necessary, but let them be so good that they will last for a number of years, so that the owners can rest assured that next year or the year after something much better will not be issued to render their machines obsolete or out of date. Nor are we advocating that present models be discontinued. There will always be a market for them, and if they make some people happy and keep the manufacturers in a good humor their existence is abundantly justified. But there must surely be enough record collectors in this country interested in getting the most out of their records to make it worth while for some manufacturer to produce a machine whose only sales point would be superlative record reproduction. This would not interfere with the sales of the many super de luxe combinations that are already on the market, for the people who buy them are usually highly impressed and pleased with the cabinet, the radio, the tone-control that permits you to accentuate the lows at the expense of the highs, and the numerous other features that only serve to irritate the man who would like to spend a quiet evening listening to good records properly reproduced. The super de luxe combination market, moreover, would be shocked and revolted by the plain box in which such a machine as we vaguely have in mind would be housed. What this market wants above all else is something garish in appearance, loud and deep in tone (distortion, usually passing unnoticed anyway, doesn't matter), and versatile in performance; a plain, simple machine that would do nothing but give fine record reproduction would thus offer no appreciable competition to the combination models now on display in the dealers' shops. But it would surely tend to make the serious collector more interested in records, and anything that would have a beneficial effect on the sales



of records these days ought certainly to be worthy of the utmost consideration by the manufacturers. Such a machine, furthermore, ought to be made available in common fairness to the buyer of good records.

Record prices are high, maybe necessarily so, but nevertheless high. Some sets are as expensive as \$40, and sets selling from \$15 to \$30 are surely not rare. The man who is willing periodically to invest sums of money of that size on records deserves to get a good reproducing machine at a reasonable price. To say that he can get a good machine for something like \$1,000 means precisely nothing. For the \$1,000 machines are not devoted entirely to record reproduction; that is only a small part of the instrument. A generous portion of the \$1,000 pays for the accompanying radio, the automatic changing device, the magnificent hand-carved cabinet, etc. The purchaser of such a machine, if he is looking only for a good phonograph, is thus paying a large sum of money for merchandise that, no matter how fine it may be, he does not want. Given an adequate machine on which to play its records, it seems quite likely that the record-buying public would tend to buy more generously and lavishly. It is true, of course, that were such a machine available, record sales would not immediately leap skyward. It would take some time before the machine could be properly distributed and find its way into the logical homes. The rapidity with which it would reach the proper collectors would depend largely upon its quality.

Nothing, it seems reasonable to believe, would be of more benefit to the industry than such a machine. It has been a long time since we have had any major improvements in our reproducing machines, and the owner of a good electrical phonograph bought in 1930, say, isn't likely to be sufficiently tempted by the latest models to exchange his 1930 machine for one of the new ones; in many cases, indeed, the earlier machines are decidedly more satisfactory than the new ones, a peculiar state of affairs to say the least. Phonograph records have always had more music in the grooves than the machines reproduced, and this is as true today as it was fifteen years ago. A tantalizing condition at best, it surely deserves the most careful consideration by the engineers and manufacturers; the man who invests large sums of money on his recorded music deserves to hear all the music he paid for—and it is common knowledge that present equipment withholds much that is important and essential if we are to have an approximately perfect duplication of the original musical performance. Last month, commenting in this place on the decline of the record industry as a big business, we observed: "So long as radio reception and phonograph reproduction remain approximately equivalent, so long will the present situation prevail, and for obvious reasons. As a means for reproducing fine music the phonograph is unparalleled, and with careful management it can always count on a comfortable livelihood. But not much more than that. . . . The only thing that might restore the phonograph to a measure of its former popularity would be some startling new development which would enable the phonograph to give much better reproduction than the radio does reception." Radio and phonograph have been running neck to neck for some years now, and it is time that the latter should forge ahead, outstripping the former in the quality of the reproduction, as it long since has in the quality of the music available. It is to be hoped that some day soon this pressing need for a fine straight phonograph will be recognized and competently attended to by some enlightened manufacturer who



is anxious for his clients to hear his records under the best possible circumstances.



While on the subject of the differences between the American and English record-buying publics it might be interesting to compare the releases that are offered these publics. Such a comparison brings to light some curious things. It is an acknowledged fact that in Europe there is far more interest in recorded music than there is in America. Europeans were much quicker to perceive the value of the phonograph as a musical instrument, and even in the acoustical days, when the phonograph industry was thriving over here—but not because of its usefulness as a musical instrument,—the Europeans were building libraries of records of worth while music. Records have always been treated over there with some of the respect and seriousness that are customarily reserved for books. It is only recently that America has accepted the machine as a genuine musical instrument, and even now only a small part of the American public accepts it as such; those who should appreciate it the most still eye it somewhat dubiously, not exactly certain yet whether or not the machine's lack of a "soul" bars it from serious consideration. Yet as we have pointed out in these columns before, the American catalogues are astonishingly rich in good music.

More recording work is done in Europe than in this country, and more records of good and bad music are issued over there in a year than are recorded in America in several years. But when one compares the monthly European lists with the American lists, one finds that the latter do not suffer by the comparison. Let us take a few months at random and list the outstanding releases of three representative European countries—England, France and Germany—and compare them with the American lists of the same months.

#### AUGUST, 1930

##### UNITED STATES

*Tannhäuser: Overture and Venusberg Music* (Wagner)

*Sonata in A Major* (Franck)

*Concerto in B Flat Major* (Tschaikowsky)

*Night on the Bare Mountain* (Moussorgsky)

*Rapsodie Espagnole* (Ravel)

*Symphony No. 3* (Beethoven)

##### ENGLAND

*Carneval: Overture* (Dvorák)

*Études Symphoniques* (Schumann)

*Hammerklavier Sonata* (Beethoven)

##### FRANCE

*L'Arlesienne Suite* (Bizet)

*Kreutzer Sonata* (Beethoven)

*Sonata for Flute and Strings* (Scarlatti)

*Danse Macabre* (Saint-Saëns)

##### GERMANY

*Iphigenia in Aulis: Overture* (Gluck)

*Brandenburg Concerto No. 6* (Bach)

*The Seasons* (Glazounow)

*Carneval* (Schumann)

*Partita in B Minor* (Bach)

*Preludes and Fugues Nos. 11 to 17* (Bach)

*Bolero* (Ravel)

*Ballade* (Fauré)

*Brandenburg Concerto No. 6* (Bach)

MARCH, 1931

UNITED STATES

*Double Concerto* (Brahms)

*Requiem Mass* (Verdi)

*Symphony No. 4* (Brahms)

*Capriccio Italien* (Tschaikowsky)

*Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*  
(Strawinski)

*Grand Fugue* (Beethoven)

*Fantasia* (Chopin)

FRANCE

*Mephisto Waltz* (Liszt)

*Siegfried Idyl* (Wagner)

*Tristan und Isolde: Love Duet* (Wagner)

*Faust* (Gounod)

*Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* (Franck)

ENGLAND

*Le Chasseur Maudit* (Franck)

*Symphony No. 5* (Beethoven)

*Sonata in G Major, Op. 39, No. 3*  
(Beethoven)

*Il Trovatore* (Verdi)

*The Gondoliers* (Gilbert-Sullivan)

*Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*  
(Strawinski)

*Sylvia Ballet* (Delibes)

*Septet in E Flat Major* (Beethoven)

GERMANY

*Funeral March* (Chopin)

*Euryanthe: Overture* (Weber)

*Till Eulenspiegel* (Strauss)

*Chorale in A Minor* (Franck)

JANUARY, 1932

UNITED STATES

*Selected Works* (Debussy)

*Symphony No. 3* (Beethoven)

*Symphony No. 4* (Mendelssohn)

*Siegfried Idyl* (Wagner)

ENGLAND

*Moldau* (Smetana)

*Götterdämmerung: Funeral March*  
(Wagner)

FRANCE

*Passacaglia in C Minor* (Bach)

*Histoires Naturelles* (Ravel)

*Études Symphoniques* (Schumann)

*Four Ballades* (Chopin)

*Sonata No. 1* (Bach)

*Suite No. 2 in B Minor* (Bach)

GERMANY

*Lohengrin: Prelude* (Wagner)

*Symphony No. 2* (Brahms)



These three months from 1930, 1931 and 1932 are picked entirely at random, with no motive of selecting months in which the American lists were particularly abundant in quantity and rich in quality. If it is argued that they do not show the European lists at their best, precisely the same argument can be advanced in defense of the American lists. There have been many months in America when more and better records were issued than are listed in the months chosen here. The same thing is true of the European lists. The companies represented in America are Columbia, Victor and Brunswick; those in England, France and Germany are H. M. V., Columbia and Polydor. The records listed comprise, of course, only the more important releases,—in most cases only works requiring more than one record. All the American releases listed are of works occupying at least three record-sides. In the European lists occasionally single records are included, principally because there were few if no sets issued that month. Such was the condition in England in January, 1932. Naturally, if all the good single records were added to these lists, they would be considerably longer. American collectors tend to pit the releases of the American companies against the sum total of all the European companies, but this is patently unjust. One may reasonably compare the American lists with those of France or England or Germany, but to compare our lists with those of all three of these countries is certainly not fair to the domestic companies.

It should not necessarily follow that one is completely satisfied with these lists to say that they show that the same quality and quantity of good music are offered the American as the European public. They show that the American record-buying public, if smaller in numbers than the European, is no less interested and is quite willing to support the best records issued by the various companies. They show that, taking one month with another, the American and European lists are equally interesting,—or, sometimes, equally dull. These facts do not correspond with the groans that American record collectors so frequently indulge in, lamenting that while in Europe the companies offer collectors a wide choice of fine music superbly recorded, in America we get next to nothing. Those correspondents who write in to remind

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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#### CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

## Charles E. Ives

By HENRY COWELL

What is an American composer? The subject of American composition is now being much agitated; yet the candidates for the position of the great American composer sometimes present curious credentials. Ernest Bloch is an American citizen, but he lived abroad until fully mature, and his music has no vestige of departure from European standards. Deems Taylor is a real American by blood and birth, but his music is a weak dilution of Wagner and Puccini. Aaron Copland is a step different from these—he is an American born, and he makes use of jazz elements in some of his music; jazz originated in America. Yet his whole technique of composition, as well as his point of view æsthetically, is taken bodily from the teachings of Nadia Boulanger, of Paris. Roy Harris is belligerently American as far as his philosophy goes—but his music is a mixture of conventional Brahms with a tincture of semi-modern French “atmosphere.” One can go on indefinitely, showing that most of those who are discussed as great American creative leaders are usually only partially American at the best. This is probably in itself characteristic of us. We have sprung from Europe, for the most part, as a people. It would be folly to expect that we would start here with an entirely new musical foundation, any more than we have changed our race by moving across the water. Thus it is no reflection on the merits of the gentlemen mentioned above to point out that they are not as exclusively of this land in every respect as they would usually like to be considered.

We have, however, one composer—and probably only one composer—who is just as much based on American traditional practices in his music as any European composer's work has ever been based on the traditions of his country. That composer is Charles E. Ives, born in Danbury, Connecticut, and now fifty-seven years old.

Ives has not only developed through concentrated feeling and highly wrought musicianship a new mode of musical expression based on Yankee village music and transmuted into a musical art, but he also created many materials, usually credited to Schönberg and Strawinski, and used them in his early works. Ives employed them many years before these European masters. America has been many years behind Europe in recognizing the value of Schönberg and Strawinski; it is therefore natural that virtually no one in America recognized that Ives' contribution was of worldwide import at the time when he made it. It is only within the last two or three years that Ives' position has begun to be realized by those who are interested in the progress of the world's music.

Now a whole group of important modernists are falling over each other in their eagerness to do him sudden honor—honor for works which have been composed twenty to thirty years, and which were never performed or published until a year or two ago. Perhaps the sudden rush to the Ives banner is due to the fact that when his works were published in *New Music Quarterly* and sent to Europe, and when the indefatigable Nicolas Slonimsky performed his works abroad with leading symphonies, Europeans recognized that here was the most potent and original figure they had been shown in American music, and said so in loud print, under



the signature of critics of known significance. Americans who were accustomed to following these European gentlemen continued to do so and now hail Ives, although before the European approbation they would have probably picked out almost anyone else as being the leading American composer!

## II

Ives is fundamentally a serious composer. This is now a necessary thing to know of any new composer, as there are many who openly do not aim at seriousness, but who believe that to amuse is the aim of music. Ives has lots of genuine Yankee wit, but underlying breadth of purpose. There is spiritual integrity behind his works, and the best of them contain an ecstasy of angelic choiring—that quintessence of feeling which is religious, but is the religion of music rather than of the church.

Ives was brought up in a small Connecticut town. He was very sensitive to this early environment. He not only became imbued with American traditions in a place where America first took a line of demarcation in feeling from Europe, but he also heard the village music, music which although often utilizing fragments of English or Irish melody as a basis, changes them radically in practice. These changes, which are usually entirely lost in writing down the music, are the very things which make the music American; the only elements that are not like the British or Celtic beginnings.

Ives heard the country fiddler, the town band, the congregational singing. A less sensitive person trying to utilize this music as a foundation for a cultivated symphony would cut out all the really original elements, leaving only that formal husk represented by familiar notation. Ives was not content to do this. He heard distinctly the fascinations of subtle characteristic features of the music which were usually thought to be crudities—notes which were thought by musicians to be out of tune; notes in which the rhythm was off the beat; singing in which a congregation sang a nebulous group of tones surrounding a centre, rather than a single tone in the middle! All such things, and many other similar departures, Ives realized were not crudities nor mistakes, but were repeated over and over, were enjoyed, were in reality the genuine and correct American practices containing the real feeling of the Yankee. Cut out these elements, and the music is denatured.

So Ives has created a whole musical style based on these typical American usages. Although he often uses folk-themes, this is not the main point—the main thing is that all the fundamental materials of his music, emotional content, rhythm, harmony, melody, etc., should have arisen from these Americanisms in music; this happens not because Ives strives for that result, but rather because he *is* a Yankee villager! In order to create his result, which now includes numerous symphonic and other works, he has had to create and initiate in every musical field. He has carried rhythmical harmony, or the combining of different simultaneous rhythms, farther than anyone else in the world ever has—and this is something that can be measured definitely, because rhythm is mathematical as well as musical. He originated poly-harmonies and tone clusters and almost every conceivable sort of dissonance when they were essential to his expression; but he has never been afraid to use the simplest concord. To be all-embracing and synthesize almost every possible musical material—

that is his accomplishment. No chord is too cheap, and none too refined, to find place in his music, which runs through a very broad human emotional gamut, and makes use of all known materials to do so. The music is always fullsome, containing anything from delicately adjusted acoustical effects to replete tonal swirls which contain almost every musical sound at once. There is often an improvisatory freedom of spirit about the music which is very refreshing after the over-exact mechanistical sort of development which most modern music is undergoing.

### III

Ives always considers the performer an integral part of his work. He realizes, as so few composers do, that the performer does part of the creating of a work as heard by auditors; and he leaves room for the performer to create, to add to his work within certain limits. His approach to his works is as though they were living entities which have the power of growth in the hands of great players. Thus he often gives directions to the performers in his scores which suggest their throwing themselves into the playing of his compositions with unusual freedom, regarding the written down form as only a beginning from which to depart; only a hint as to the depths to be plumbed rather than as a Proscustian bed, to conform to which all original ideas must be sacrificed.

It is delightful in an Ives work suddenly to run into a composer's note which informs you that if you have worked yourself into an emotional frenzy you may play the passage *fortissimo*, while if you are still feeling quiet, you may play it *piano* instead! Or to find several different versions of a certain measure given, any of which may be played according to the performer's taste. We have seen alternate versions of pieces before, but only when the preferred version might be too difficult to play, and the composer also included an easier version; never before was the choice a matter of musical taste. Characteristic of the curious sort of original ideas with which his works teem is the passage in one of his symphonic works (the Fourth Symphony) which is written for two independent simultaneous orchestras—each one in a different key, playing a different piece. Counterpoint of two compositions at once! Finally one of the orchestras dies away; and Ives informs the conductor that it may die away anywhere within a page or two. Because the second orchestra is independent in rhythm as well as in key and matter! The suggestion for this double orchestra passage came from an early experience of Ives, in which he was marching and playing in one band, and heard another band, playing a different work, marching toward his band from the opposite direction. They both played at once, each trying to drown the other, and finally the second band was lost in the distance.

### IV

To sum up, Ives is Yankee American. He comes from a family which has lived in America for many generations. He is steeped in American traditions and American music through native feeling and early environment. His thorough formal musical education at Yale University did not prevent him from developing original and indigenous musical materials in every field of music, and they have proved essential to his musical expression. Many of these materials are based on typical



American country village practices of such subtle and un-notable nature that they were lost until Ives explored them, and built up a system of notating some of them. Some of Ives' materials he originated and used during the period from about 1900 to 1910; Stravinski and Schönberg became world-famous because they originated similar materials during the period between 1909 and 1918. Ives used jazz rhythms in some of his serious music during the same period; Gershwin and Copland have become known because they use jazz themes in symphonic works today.

Yet all these things pale before the most significant fact of all—Ives is great, and all his remarkable explorations in musical substance are utilized by him to give expression to emotions and ideas which although containing humor and delicacy are profound, and cover almost the entire range of human experience.

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us that Americans don't like good music, whereas in Europe good music is lavishly supported, might find it illuminating to reflect on these things. Expressing any sort of admiration for things American is not altogether fashionable nowadays, but even at the risk of committing that most horrendous of crimes—*i. e.*, seeming to be excessively patriotic—we might also point out that in the past six months far and away the most interesting and best recorded sets have originated in America.



HENRY COWELL, who contributes an article on Charles E. Ives to this issue, was born near San Francisco in 1897. He was educated, musically and otherwise, at the University of California and later in New York. He has toured Europe, including Russia, several times as a composer-pianist, and is editor of *New Music Quarterly*, director of the Pan American Association of Composers and the New Music Society of California, and the author of the book "New Musical Resources." Mr. Cowell has published many articles on musical subjects and lectured for a number of universities. He is the co-inventor of a new musical instrument called the "Rhythmicon," which enables the player to produce any polyrhythmic combination with mathematical precision. Mr. Cowell's symphonic works have been performed by major orchestras here and abroad. He has been awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and is now studying primitive music at the University of Berlin. An article by Dr. Isaac Goldberg on Mr. Cowell was published in the July, 1931, issue of *Disques*.



HOWARD D. MCKINNEY, whose article "The Organ: Has It Place in the Modern Musical Sun?" is published in part in this issue, was educated at Rutgers and Columbia Universities, where he studied with Daniel Gregory Mason. He has also studied with Felix Lamond and Tertius Noble and others, here and abroad. At present Mr. McKinney is Associate Professor and Director of Music at Rutgers University and an editor for J. Fischer and Brother, music publishers, New York. He has made a special study of the organ and has spent considerable time in Europe, where he heard practically all the important instruments, especially those of an earlier period. He has contributed to various musical journals, including a series of articles on German organs published several years ago in *The Diapson*.

## The Organ: Has It Place in the Modern Musical Sun?\*

By HOWARD D. McKINNEY

Writing in the August *Gramophone*, A. C. D. de Brisay laments the fact that a modern performer on the organ is hardly regarded by critics and concert goers, and he might have added, by purchasers of records, as in the same artistic class as a Cortot, a Casals or a Kreisler. "Lists of virtuosi in various branches of music invariably omit mention of the organist with the same regularity as the critic demurs from listening to his playing or treating his instrument with serious regard." Anyone familiar with our musical situation will readily confirm the truth of Mr. de Brisay's statement at the same time that he may wonder why these things be. For the organ, one of the most ancient of instruments, has always been held in a certain esteem by music lovers: grand, sublime, impressive, inspiring—these are the adjectives which have been used from time immemorial in characterizing the tone of this King of Instruments. An ancient writer puts it well: "When its tones swell forth, there is no denying it, it is like the fiat of the Omnipotent." And a modern lover of the organ thus apostrophizes:

*Temple of Tone art thou! The shrine supreme  
Of sound's mysterious powers and richest gifts,  
God-given thought alone could have inspired  
The human mind to frame so grand a work!  
Great Organ—Monarch of all Instruments.*

(Audsley)

Why then the "scarcely concealed contempt," the obvious lack of interest on the part of the musical public? Mr. de Brisay suggests that the low standard of playing in vogue among organists until recently has been largely responsible, but there are other and even more important reasons why most of us have not become ardent devotees of the organ and its music.

The impressive, soul-satisfying dignity of the organ's tone is a result of the manner in which it is produced, not by means of beating reed or vibrating string, but by metal cylindrical pipes blown, as Emperor Julian described it in the fourth century, "by a blast that rushes up from a leathern cavern beneath their roots, while a mortal running with swift fingers over the keys that are their concordant rulers, makes them give forth melodious sounds." In principle the organ is nothing more than a mechanical means for playing a Pan's Pipe or syrinx—one of the earliest of all instruments, consisting of tubes of varying lengths bound together in such a way that they could be blown upon by the player's breath. In the organ the air is supplied mechanically and its admittance to the pipes controlled by means of keys, one of them for each pitch produced. In order to produce varied qualities of tone, the pipes are made in different ways and whole sets of them, one for each note on the keyboard, used for certain qualities of tone desired. In order to build up a suitable ensemble these various sets of pipes are used together, so that oftentimes when a single key is depressed in a large organ it gives breath to as many as fifty or sixty pipes of different sorts all sounding the same note.

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\*The concluding instalment of Mr. McKinney's article will appear in the December issue.



The broadly elevated character inherent in organ tone was early recognized by the Christians as being ideal for providing music in their services, and this in spite of its unfortunate associations in so far as they were concerned; for it had been used by the Romans for theatrical and gladiatorial spectacles. Ever since the fourth century, however, its most natural and fitting place has been in the church, especially since the magnificent interiors supplied by the early church builders were ideal places for the proper hearing of organ tone. As ecclesiastical architecture grew more and more magnificent and the church interiors vaster and vaster, those responsible for providing organs for these buildings experimented with various means for flooding these great churches with tone and the organ's mechanism became more and more elaborate in order to provide adequate tonal resources. It was not until the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that the development of the mechanics of organ building allowed the builders to attain their ideal in providing an ensemble completely suitable for their purpose. The organs of these years, in spite of crudities of mechanical control when compared to our modern instruments, were able to provide a rich, satisfying, thrilling tone which sounded to wonderful advantage in the resonant interiors available. And, as has always been the case in similar circumstances, composers were inspired to provide suitable music, once the instrument became capable of playing it. The organ of those days was an important, living, vital instrument in the sense that it hardly is today. Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the supremely great, was providing it with a repertoire which in extent and quality has never been equalled. It had arrived at a point of perfection in its tonal development that has not been greatly improved upon in the years since, and had the advantage of adequate and proper surroundings into which to project its glorious voice.

## II

Since then in many instances the organ has fallen on evil days, especially in so far as the instruments in this country are concerned. Although most European builders have followed more or less closely the ideals of the eighteenth century in developing their modern instruments and have the incalculable advantage of proper auditoriums for their organs, most of our American instruments have forsaken the sunny classic fields of adequate, dignified tone and wandered far astray into ear-tickling and sensation-mongering paths. This has been partly due to the small, stuffy "parlor" churches which most of our societies have seen fit to provide in order to secure homey, social surroundings for their services. Organ tone, because of its peculiar quality, demands a certain amount of reverberation—echo, to use an every-day term—to make it completely effective. And because this enlivening influence has been impossible in our churches of wood and plaster, it was natural that the organ builders and players should turn their attention to effects that could come off in these unresonant surroundings. Soft, enervating tones, effects borrowed from the orchestra, string, wood-wind and brass imitations, percussive, harp and chime tones, all of them justifiable in themselves but only as subsidiary to essential organ tone, became the rule. Many of our present day instruments are built up of a rather miscellaneous collection of these pleasing effects and the glorious richness and dignified strength which should be provided above all things is likely to be forgotten. And, as was again inevitable, a school of organ composition suit-

able to these conditions has arisen, and we have the rather pitiable spectacle of the King of Instruments being called upon to discourse treacly melodies and sobbing accompaniments or else to produce orchestral-like imitation and suggest intricacies quite unsuited to its inherent poise and natural dignity.

The importance of the character of the auditorium into which an organ sounds cannot be overestimated. Technically speaking, the auditorium is an acoustical device of great importance to any instrument, orchestra, piano, voice, as well as organ. Its chief purpose in so far as music is concerned is to enable persons assembled to hear what occurs in it to best advantage. And the very fact that so many architects have been ignorant or perhaps negligent regarding the action of sound phenomena within confined spaces has given us so many very bad auditoriums. If these are not properly constructed, a resultant echo caused by the reflection of the sound pulsations from the various wall surfaces will so confuse the music being produced as to make it an unpleasant jangle of discordant elements, and thereby destroy its beauty. On the other hand, if every bit of reverberation is removed (as is usually done in a broadcasting studio) the music will sound lifeless and dead to the auditors who are somewhat removed from its source. This period of reverberation is more important for organ tone than for that of any other instrument and a certain amount of echo, even an amount that would somewhat confuse other types of musical tone, is necessary if we are to get the power and thrill of the full organ as well as the beautiful floating quality possible from some of the softer tones. Those who have heard a properly designed organ speaking into a fine, large, resonant interior, playing the type of music really suited to the instrument's character, know what organ tone should sound like. Unfortunately the coincidence of these necessary factors in the production of good tone is rare in this country; and so most of us, critics as well as laymen, have probably never heard great organ music as it may sound, although we are surrounded on every side by instruments that are supposed to produce it. Practically every church in the country possesses one, they are being placed in many auditoriums in all the large cities, and the wailing tones of a certain species of them greet our ears almost continuously on the radio.

### III

The reader can easily prove the truth of these rather sweeping statements for himself. Organ tone because of its very nature, being broad and thick—unfocused, so to speak,—and lacking in natural harmonics, does not record well. But there are a few records which can suggest, even to the uninitiated, the possible glories of this type of music. By a happy coincidence, two rather recent recordings of the same piece have been made under conditions which conclusively prove that the organ and auditorium have as much to do with the ultimate effect of organ music as do the composer and player. A couple of years ago Fernando Germani, one of the most talented of the younger school of organ players that is springing up around the world just now, made a record of the great fugue from Liszt's tremendously long fantasia for the organ, *Ad nos ad salutarem* (V-35960). This recording was done in this country, on the organ in the Wanamaker Auditorium, New York, to be exact. Those who know this instrument well will hardly be surprised at the manner in which its characteristically flat, dead, unresonant tone



has been registered by the wax. Germani is a fine player, fully capable of realizing everything possible from this instrument, but all his brilliance cannot overcome the handicap of organ and auditorium, and his record is dull and uninteresting, providing the sort of "robot" effect which the general public has come to consider inevitable in music played on the organ.

Listen to the same fugue as played in St. Michael's Church, Hamburg, Germany, one of the most magnificent interiors possible for this kind of music, having resonance aplenty without confusing echo (B-90041). The organ used is a fine modern instrument, constructed according to the traditional ideals of tone, however. Even if you do not understand the music and cannot follow Liszt's masterly treatment, the vitality and strength of the tone produced under the capable fingers of Alfred Sittard, organist of the church, cannot escape your attention. Listen to the same organ and organist's recording of Buxtehude's Prelude and Fugue in G minor (B-90177), written away back in the seventeenth century, and you will gain a further impression of what good organ tone may be. Such Bach records as the Prelude and Fugue in A minor (V-C1876) played on the organ in Westminster Abbey, London, the Prelude and Fugue in G major (V-7271), played by Marcel Dupré, and the recent Columbia recording (C-D11079) of the Choral Prelude *Sleepers Awake*, may also help. If you need a Horrible Example of the emasculated sort of thing which usually goes for organ music with the great public, listen to Archer Gibson play Kreisler's *The Old Refrain* or Carrie Jacobs-Bond's *Perfect Day* on the "Grand Organ in Charles M. Schwab's New York residence" (V-36019).

[To be concluded in the December issue]



## Musical Holidays

By DOROTHY E. NICHOLS

Most of us like holidays. But since we no longer go to church for our festivals, nor gather around flag-draped speakers' platforms, nor witness parades with the old enthusiasm, holidays tend to become mere days off, days to have meals at unexpected hours, days to do odd jobs, days to take the car out on crowded highways. Revolting against the imposed conventionality of civic celebrations we have become all alike in individuality.

But there are conventional people, myself among them, who like to celebrate. We like to do something appropriate to the idea of the day, and to a phonophile this can have only one meaning. We must find the music expressive of the emotion which the festival was meant to create in us. This leads to new discoveries, sometimes in the meaning of the day, sometimes in the music.

As a double example, one New Year's Eve, being unable to go out, we looked through the records on hand and happened to select the Chorale of the Ninth Symphony. We found to our surprise that at the end we had in us more of a New Year feeling than if we had been out singing *Auld Lang Syne* as the clock struck twelve. Never before had I felt so strongly the hope and joy and consecration, the sense of entering upon a new life, that is in this music. It was the apotheosis of the new year.

This set me on the path of finding holiday music. Further stimulation in the search came from the selections of the radio, which also likes to celebrate holidays. The radio's idea of a New Year's symphony program was to play Grieg's *Farewell to Spring*. That, the announcer explained, was for the old year. Then they played Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*. That was to greet the new year.

The radio's celebration of Thanksgiving was no less original. Here is a program announced as specially arranged for that day:

<i>Egmont</i> Overture .....	Beethoven
<i>Omar Khayyam</i> Oriental Rhapsody.....	Cadman
Symphony <i>From the New World</i> : Largo.....	Dvorák
<i>Rhinegold</i> : Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla.....	Wagner
Suite for Orchestra.....	Dohnányi

It seemed to me that I could do better than the worn Largo or an American's Oriental Rhapsody, particularly a rhapsody on Omar Khayyam, whose faith could hardly be called thanksgiving.

The difficulty in selecting holiday music is to know what the holiday means. What is Thanksgiving? Try to explain it to a visiting Englishman. After you have told him all about the pilgrim fathers he still does not know what it is for now, and you can only reply that there has to be one day in the year for the clan to eat turkey together.

But if we go back to the pilgrims and the sense of long suffering, and faith, and rejoicing, *Elijah* makes a nice program. The Israelites had Ahab and Jezebel



instead of Indians, and drought instead of hunger, and they drowned the prophets of Baal instead of ducking witches, but the emotions are very alike; anyhow, it is a good excuse for playing *Elijah* at least once a year.

The first Thanksgiving should have had some glorious oratorio written on it, but it is too late now, for it was expressing in action what the oratorios of the same century expressed in art. That is where the older religious festivals have the advantage. Even the radio cannot go wrong on church days, and the phonophile can do no better than follow its example. For Easter the *St. Matthew Passion* and Sir John Stainer's *Crucifixus*, with a choice of requiems for Good Friday, from the fiercely dramatic one of Verdi (superbly recorded) to the touching beauty of Mozart's. The Metropolitan chooses *Parsifal*, but the opera, glittering, sensuously mystic, is so far from the stark and awful tragedy of this darkest day that it becomes almost a sacrilege, like some of the more gorgeous Italian paintings of religious scenes.

## II

Christmas and Bach are inseparable. Stokowski felt this when he played his magnificent Bach program on Christmas day two years ago. For the children's part of the festival no one can improve on the Metropolitan's choice of *Hansel and Gretel*. In December the radio always indulges in an orgy of *Nutcracker Suites*, but for me this has never had any flavor of Christmas. The most perfect Christmas record I know is the English Singers' *Wassail, wassail, all over the town*.

We have more freedom when we come to the holidays not ordinarily associated with concert celebrations. There is Hallowe'en, for instance. This has always been one of my favorite holidays, but once you have passed the age of running around the block dressed up in a sheet, with a pillowcase over your head tied up at the corners for ears, there seems no way to recapture the sense of old mysteries hanging in the dark October night. We want those ghosts that haunted primitive man, just for a reminiscent scare, without really being afraid. And we have at hand the *Rite of Spring* (whose seasonal title will not hinder us). Play the Pagan Night, and in Strawinski's version, for in Stokowski's the moon has risen.

The desire to dedicate a day to the dead seems to be a natural impulse. When All Souls' Day lost its significance for us we adopted Memorial Day, at first a specific war memorial, now an equivocal sort of day, but one which seems on its way to becoming our day for the dead. For this nothing can compare with the Brahms Requiem. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted," words that in the face of grief seem cruel, yet that go to the deepest springs of human experience,—these words Brahms chose for the opening chorale. It sounds the theme of comfort with which he closes. Comfort is sometimes sought in a denial of death or in flattering it into a semblance of something sweet and lovely. Brahms chooses to evoke the full terror, the awful majesty of death in the overpowering second chorale, the dead march in three-four time. It is this terrible and awful death before which man falls prostrate in despair that the composer meets with fortitude and faith, which carries through to the thrilling victory and final benediction.

Some music seems cut to a pattern for a day. So *Till Eulenspiegel* for April Fool, for it has in it not only practical joking, but the medieval atmosphere when

April Fool was an important carnival.

If you are old-fashioned enough to associate May Day with English poetry and May-pole dances, to see it as the day of flowers, the choice among spring compositions is distracting. If you are modern and have made over this lovely celebration into the ugly pattern of strikes and bloody demonstrations, that is another matter. The old-fashioned May Day has become the day of the children, and so I pick Schubert's Octet. For Schubert expresses ideal childhood, the entrancing childhood that exists only in the minds of grown-ups. There is a current of eager restlessness in the Octet, the instruments seem hardly able to wait for their turns. When Schubert is angry in this music it is a child stamping its foot, when he is sad it is the wistfulness of a child, when he is gay, it is the unrestrained and rather serious joy of a child.

With May Day no longer the day for lovers we must have the day of St. Valentine, and my choice is a short and perfect thing, Brahms' song, *Thou My Queen*. For the more cynically-minded who want a satiric touch, we might play Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*.

Now that Gilbert and Sullivan have been mentioned, *The Gondoliers* would be my own birthday choice. Each phonophile may select his favorite of the operas for his private celebration.

When we come to patriotic holidays we are apt to look for "patriotic music," or at least a native composer. But mindful of Omar, we steer away from this and pick the finale of the Brahms Second Symphony for the Fourth of July. Never was music more jubilant. Damrosch happily characterized it as "good news, first whispered, then breaking into shouts of joy." In all modesty, to ourselves at least, the birth of our country may be termed "good news."

With the birthdays of national heroes the subject grows in difficulty. The anniversary of an event is comparatively simple beside the complexity of a man. Perhaps the music for Lincoln has not yet been written, or perhaps the new Lincoln symphony is it, but it is not available for our phonographs. A friend suggests the Sibelius First for Lincoln's day. At once the joking, burly horse-play of the Scherzo comes to mind, but no less appropriate is the slow movement's deep tenderness. That melody, divided between strings and answering horns, is a fit expression of a character that could come through a war as head of the victorious side, and yet remain a symbol of sympathy with mankind.

The last movement has in it the tragic victory, and in the first the lightning plays about the head of the leader in the gathering gloom. Yet there is in this symphony, for all its appropriate ruggedness, too much of passion and fury and dramatic storming and not enough of patience and long enduring. Benét puts these words into Lincoln's mouth,

"... O Will of God,  
I am a patient man, and I can wait.  
"That is my only virtue as I see it,  
Ability to wait and hold my own  
And keep my own resolves once they are made  
In spite of what the smarter people say."



For this quality we must look to a smaller work, one that will not be thought of heroic stature. But Lincoln was not a hero in the Siegfried sense. He was not a man of dazzling personality, unmatched skill, inspired daring, like Cortez. As Stephenson has shown us, he was a genius, a poet, and there was in him something of the mystic. In his life he expressed what an artist expresses in his art, the symbol of our ideals, and it is over the souls and hearts of men, rather than their actions, that his leadership extends.

This work of a minor composer speaks straight to the heart; he is one that suffers but does not complain. It is Smetana and in his Quartet, especially in the slow movement, there is this power of holding on through bitter anguish. When the catastrophe in the last movement comes, there is a shudder such as must have passed over men's hearts when the assassin's bullet pierced the leader.

### III

And while I am in the business of program-making, let's get this matter of the Beethoven Third Symphony settled. It is disturbing to have that piece of music wandering through the world like Diogenes with his lantern, looking for a subject worthy of it. Napoleon is ruled out, Beethoven himself having attended to that. In this year of 1932 we cannot all be Daughters of the Revolution but we can demonstrate our hero-worship by claiming anything that looks good.

In running over the possibilities among heroes Washington has of course occurred to us before as a subject for the *Eroica*. But there is in the Symphony a boisterous and lusty humor which has never quite seemed a part of the character of the Father of our Country. However, filled with Bicentennial Spirit, even this difficulty finds a solution. Any music can be fitted to an idea, given the will to win.

Nor could any program devised for the *Eroica* do more violence to the spirit of that great work than has already been done. Program-makers take first prize for mechanical imaginations. Let the composer sound a horn and their reaction comes with gratifying precision, "Hunting Scene." Ripple a flute and they know it is a brook. Yet there was a distressing originality in fitting the hurly-burly of this Scherzo to a scene of soldiers hunting hamadryads! Nor is a "truce at the hero's grave" much improvement.

But let us play the *Eroica* on February 22. The first movement is surely appropriate: the nobility, the flow of purpose, the dignity, the strength and hope, the upward lift, the balance, the simplicity of the heroic theme—no music could more perfectly express Washington's character, nor is there any other character in history who so nearly suits the music.

The second movement does not offer any real difficulty. It has always been a magnificent funeral procession with its stark, Greek-chorus figures moving in a rhythm of grief, its gleam of gold and bronze through the shadows, but with very little effort of imagination it can be fitted to Valley Forge. The snow falls, gloom and despair press on the leader, with pity for the sufferings of men; doubts beset his heavy responsibility, strong resolution flows through the agony, hope gleams, and faith sustains a spirit of steadfast fortitude. This music, which I like to think is the greatest single composition written, has always seemed to transcend human

experience, yet in the light of Valley Forge, it can almost be felt to be illumined by humanity.

Now see how neatly the troublesome Scherzo fits into this plot. The wild, tumultuous joy of it is the new nation victorious, freed from the tyrannies of an old world, facing west; celebration of the end of a war, the rough humor of frontier festivities, the high moment when the wave on the Atlantic coast rises to its crest before it breaks and flows west to inundate a continent.

Like other commentators I lay hands on the fourth movement with less confidence. Some, indeed, give it up and say that it cannot be made to fit, and Beethoven did not know what he was doing when he wrote it, or that at this point he abandoned his heroic conception. But this is to belittle its enchantment. It has the spirit of a man whistling at his work, a rush of high confidence and eager power that is not far from the spirit that takes a new land and sets out to build a new society; it is the vision that Washington stood for. It overflows with zestful hope, and if Beethoven thought he was writing about Napoleon and revolutionary France, I feel sure, sustained by this Bicentennial year, that his subconscious was thinking of Washington and his United States.

Is this any farther fetched than fitting the Symphony to the Iliad, or calling the Funeral March a "nocturnal visit to the battlefield"?

There may be some objection from Germany at our taking over the *Eroica* as a national symphony, but they have taken the name of Washington for a Platz in Berlin, and by diligent application we ought to be able to find one theme we could assign to Baron Von Steuben, and thus remove all dissent.





## Recorded Programs

[Such a vast quantity of good music is now available for the phonograph that quite frequently records of more than ordinary merit are overlooked. It will be the purpose of this page to call attention to such records. Readers are invited to send in their suggestions. Records which appeared prior to the appearance of Disques and hence have never been reviewed in these pages will be given preference. All types and makes will be considered, and an effort will be made to avoid the hackneyed and excessively familiar.]

### BRAHMS

#### "Feldeinsamkeit"; "Nachtigall"; "Ständchen"

Elena Gerhardt (Mezzo-Soprano) with piano accompaniments by Coenraad Van Bos.

[One 12-inch disc (V-D2009). \$2]

The broad harmonies and deliberate phrasing of *Feldeinsamkeit* convey perfectly that sense of spirit soaring freely in a dimensionless universe, which was in the mind of the poet, Allmer—who, it is related, thought that Brahms had quite overdressed his simple poem! This song is a good example of the wonderful way in which Brahms could set poetry of a philosophical color. And how beautifully Gerhardt sings it, especially the "turn" at the end of each stanza. The pieces on the other side are slighter, but scarcely less masterfully conceived. In *Nachtigall* the piano imitates the nightingale. *Ständchen* tells (in very sprightly syncopated fashion) of three students singing to the maiden fair, who stirs in her sleep and whispers, "Don't forget me" . . . Interpretation, accompaniments, recording, all are very fine.

R. W. S.

### SCHUBERT

#### "Die Schöne Müllerin"

Hans Duhan (Baritone) with piano accompaniments by Ferdinand Foll.

(Three 12-inch and seven 10-inch discs in album. H. M. V. set No. 64. \$16.50)

Schubert's first cycle is brighter and less difficult of interpretation than *Die Winterreise*, but one seldom hears any of its songs excepting *Wohin?* and perhaps one or two more. Richard Capell devotes a chapter to it in his fine book, *Schubert's Songs*, and comments that the glory of this cycle lies in its total effect rather than in exceptional beauty of individual songs. Nevertheless, one can scarcely avoid favoritism even here: my weakness is for the tender and appealing questioning of *Der Neugierige*, and the placid monotony of *Des Baches Wiegenlied* . . . Although the records making up this set can doubtless be purchased separately, it is much recommended that one buy the complete album at one time. If the price seems like a great deal for a few songs, be it remembered that, in its way, the cycle tells as complete a drama as any German or Italian opera. . . . Hans Duhan, I am told, lacks some of the technical qualities of the lieder singer *par excellence*; but for the music lover who is not a singer, his performances are not noticeably inferior, and his enunciation is very clear. Accompaniments and recording are good.

R. W. S.

### GLINKA

#### Kamarinskaia

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates.

[One 12-inch disc (V-D1856). \$2]

This sprightly little piece, written in 1848, is based on a couple of wedding songs and dance tunes, and its simple gayety and spontaneity make it an admirable piece for recording. Coates and the London Symphony—the combination that has given us so many fine recordings of Russian music—play it with the proper verve, and the recording is as fine as we are likely to get under present methods.



## ORCHESTRA

ELGAR

V-DB1665

to

V-DB1667

IMPORTED

"IN THE SOUTH" *Overture*. Five sides and  
BAVARIAN DANCE NO. 3. One side. London Symphony  
Orchestra conducted by Edward Elgar.  
Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

If, as many of his admirers stoutly maintain, Elgar is a "great" composer, then his case is rather a special one, for it is hard to think of many other "great" composers who have so many potboilers and inferior works disfiguring the complete lists of their compositions. Moreover, it is similarly difficult to recall many who were as fond of their worst works as Elgar appears to be. Tchaikowsky was sufficiently self-critical to realize that his *1812 Overture* was not exactly a masterpiece. But Elgar has not only written many inferior works; he also has gone to the pains of recording them, directing the recording orchestra himself. None of the great composers wrote nothing but masterpieces; all of them, sometime or other, betrayed their kinship with the human race in an unmistakable manner. But few of them mixed in first-rate works with cheap, commonplace pieces, and dull, pointless ones so frequently and disconcertingly as Elgar has done.

Whatever preconceived notions the title of this work may have put in the hearer's head are promptly and somewhat depressingly dispelled when he hears the music. *In the South* is a likely enough title, and from it one would expect almost anything than that which Elgar has given us in the *Overture*. The work was the outcome of a visit to the Italian Riviera, and was the new work of the three days' "Elgar Festival" given in the Covent Garden Opera House in 1904. The *Overture* does not constitute very good advertising for the Italian Riviera, and there is obviously a considerable difference between Elgar's musical description of it and the reports we usually get. It is cold, harsh, forbidding music, singularly dull and uninteresting, and might just as appropriately have been entitled *In the Hoosegow Overture*. Elgar uses a rather large orchestra and keeps it going at full volume most of the way through the piece, pausing only occasionally for quieter passages. These are pretty dull, however, save for an attractive horn solo about half-way through the work. The whole effect is one of dreary monotony. Those English critics who praise with equal enthusiasm everything that comes from Elgar's hands, pouring the same eloquent perfume on the *Crown of India* as on the symphonies, really do the composer a great disservice. Reading their glowing accounts, one is led to expect that here at last is a man who composes only masterpieces, and those who have heard all the Elgar recordings know only too well that this is very far from the truth. Anyone beginning an acquaintance with Elgar's music with *In the South* or the *Crown of India* would consent to sit through the symphonies or some of the other better works only after extraordinary persuasion.

The performance and recording of this set are worthy of much finer music. The London Symphony always performs admirably under Elgar, and here it strives heroically with the dull pages of the *Overture*, but it is a thankless task. The recording is magnificently done, but this isn't much of an asset to the set, since it



enables us to establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that the dullness of the records is the fault of the music and not of an inadequate performance or inferior recording. . . . On the reverse side is a *Bavarian Dance* by Elgar. It is better than the Overture principally because it is only one-fifth as long.



**STOCK**  
V-7387 { **SYMPHONIC WALTZ, Op. 8.** Two sides. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

This disc, now issued on the regular Victor list for November, was given a special release over a year ago and was noticed in the July, 1931, issue of *Disques*. Mr. Stock, already familiar to the phonograph audience as a conductor, now appears as a composer. The waltz, composed in 1907 and written for a large orchestra, is not very exciting music but it is certainly very pleasant to listen to. It has an engaging swing and is elaborately developed and orchestrated. The performance is spirited and competent, the recording up to the highest Victor standards.

**LISZT**  
**MOZART**  
C-50342D { **MEPHISTO WALTZ.** (Liszt) Three sides and  
and { **IDOMENEO RÈ DI CRETA: Overture.** (Mozart) One side.  
C-50343D { Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

The Liszt *Mephisto* Waltz was reviewed from the imported pressings in the March, 1931, issue of *Disques*. It is pleasant music, capably played and recorded. The imported pressings carried on the odd side the Introduction to d'Indy's *Fervaal*. Mozart's *Idomeneo* Overture is substituted in its place here. It, too, is done competently.

**HAYDN**  
C-68067D { **SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR.** Four sides. Brussels Royal Con-  
and { servatory Orchestra conducted by Désiré Defauw.  
C-68068D { Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

These records, reviewed from the imported pressings on page 302 of the September issue, are more carefully listed by the local Columbia Company than they were in the European supplements. The symphony, according to Columbia, is No. 63 in the Wotquenne Catalogue, No. 41 in the Pohl. The release is mainly valuable in that it brings to the phonograph audience a comparatively unknown Symphony by Haydn; the performance and recording are only fair.

**SUK**  
V-AM3915 { **V NOVY ZIVOT.** Two sides. Bohemian Philharmonic Orches-  
IMPORTED { tra conducted by F. Stupka. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

This work is not included in any of the lists of Suk's compositions that we have seen. Joseph Suk is not an entirely unfamiliar name to the phonograph audience, for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has recorded a polka of his called *Fairy Tales*, and the Bohemian String Quartet, of which he is a member, has recorded his Quartet in B Major, Op. 11, for Polydor. Suk was born in Krecovice, Czechoslovakia, in 1874, and studied violin and composition at the Prague Conservatoire under Bennewitz, Stecker and Dvorák. He was greatly influenced by Dvorák, and married his daughter. The piece given here is a bright, merry march, beginning



somewhat solemnly with important flourishes from the brass and rolls on the drums. The orchestra plays lustily, and the recording is excellent.

**WEBER**  
C-68069D

**EURYANTHE: Overture.** Two sides. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.  
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The imported pressings of this disc arrived in America several months ago, and it was reviewed in the June issue of *Disques*. Neither recording nor performance is up to the usual standard of the Mengelberg-Concertgebouw recordings, but that standard, as those familiar with these discs know, is well above the average, so that an indifferent disc from Amsterdam is usually the equal of the best of most other symphonic organizations.



## CONCERTO

**LALO**  
V-L923  
to  
V-L926  
IMPORTED

**SYMPHONIE ESPAGNOLE.** Eight sides. Henry Merkel (Violin) and Padeloup Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola.  
Four 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 728.

It is with considerable astonishment that one realizes that this is the first electrical recording of the popular *Symphonie espagnole*. Its neglect by the recording companies is no less surprising than the indifference with which, until fairly recently, the companies treated Lalo's works. The Gramophone Shop's *Encyclopedia* contains less than a page of Lalo recordings, but in recent months French H. M. V., the sponsor of this version of the *Symphonie espagnole*, has added several notable recordings of his music to its catalogue. The ballet suite, *Namouna*, the Overture to *Le Roi d'Ys*, a Scherzo, an Andantino (from *Le Divertissement*), and now the *Symphonie espagnole* have all appeared in the past few months.

Why it took the companies so long to get around to Lalo can't be easily explained, for his music is the kind that possesses a widespread appeal and so can be safely counted upon to make staunch friends. One wonders, indeed, whether these releases weren't delayed too long. Several years ago, before the catalogues acquired their present comfortable girth, music so tuneful and pleasant to listen to as Lalo's would have attracted considerable attention on records. Now popular attention is concentrated more on men like Ravel and Strawinski, and the Lalos are more or less overlooked.

At any rate, it is fitting and proper that so attractive and sparkling a work as the *Symphonie espagnole* should be recorded. Introduced in 1875 by Sarasate, the work won an immediate success, and a performance of it by a competent orchestra and violinist is pretty certain to evoke impressive rounds of applause at almost any concert. With its gay tunes and its alternately langorous and lively rhythms, it is



the sort of music that sounds extraordinarily well on the phonograph. The solo part is felicitously conceived, displaying the violin at its most charming and attractive, and the orchestral background is full of piquant effects. Music that appeals so readily as this does generally loses its appeal equally quickly, but somehow the *Symphonie espagnole* seems to be built of more substantial stuff, for it stands the test of repetition uncommonly well, and providing its likeable tunes are not worked to death it can always be reliably counted upon to provide an enjoyable forty minutes or so entertainment.



There are five movements: *Allegro non troppo*, *Scherzando*, *Intermezzo*, *Andante* and *Rondo*. These offer sufficient variety and contrast to prevent monotony. The performance here, though by no means a sensational one, has the proper dash and verve, and the soloist, Henry Merkel, plays his part with warmth and distinction, the accompanying orchestra, conducted by the industrious and always competent Coppola, backing him up with spirit. The recording is full and open.

# RAVEL

C-68064D

to

C-68066D

CONCERTO for Piano and Orchestra. Marguerite Long (Piano) and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maurice Ravel. Five sides and  
PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DÉFUNTE. One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Freitas-Branco. Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 176. \$6.

Introduced last season and recently recorded by the French Columbia Company, Ravel's Piano Concerto now appears under the label of the American Columbia Company and occupies the three envelopes of album set No. 176. Mr. Slonimsky's favorable review of the set, based on a hearing of the imported pressings, was printed in last month's *Disques*. The set makes a desirable addition to Columbia's admirable shelf of masterwork albums.

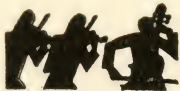
# HANDEL

V-DA1261

IMPORTED

CONCERTO NO. 13 for Organ and Orchestra ("Cuckoo and Nightingale"). One side and  
CONCERTO NO. 7 for Organ and Orchestra: *Bourrée*. One side. Herbert Dawson (Organ) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

In common with the rest of the world, the phonograph audience is frequently too much impressed with mere size, attaching more importance to an album of records than to a single disc. This is only natural, but occasionally a little 10-inch disc worth dozens of the more imposing recordings appears. Such were the two little 10-inch records containing Dr. Bullock's recording of the Handel Organ Concerto in B Flat, released last winter by Victor on a special list; and those who recall that charming set will find something equally delightful in this little record. Such straightforward, buoyant music, played with such gusto and bounce as the London Symphony and Herbert Dawson play it here, is always stimulating and makes excellent recording material. Well rounded and full is the reproduction which balances the organ and orchestra nicely and brings them both out with fine clarity and volume.



## CHAMBER MUSIC

HAYDN

V-DB1628

to

V-DB1631

and

V-DB1634

to

V-DB1636

IMPORTED

STRING QUARTETS: *C Major*, Op. 20, No. 2; *C Major*, Op. 33, No. 3; *G Major*, Op. 77, No. 1. Fourteen sides. Pro Arte String Quartet (Onnou-Prévost-Halleux-Maas). Seven 12-inch discs in album. Haydn Quartet Society Set No. 1. \$14.

Miniature Scores: Eulenburg Nos. 108, 53 and 61.

Compton Mackenzie's opinion, based on an advance hearing of the proofs of these records, that "both from the point of view of playing and of recording I think we shall be able to call these the most beautiful examples of chamber music hitherto produced for the gramophone up to date" is not likely to supply material for much argument.\* The first releases of the Haydn Quartet Society are no less impressive than the first albums of the Beethoven and Wolf Societies; in choice of performers, choice of music, and excellence of performance and recording, these albums set a standard that only occasionally is equalled by the releases on the ordinary lists. This is as it should be, and one rejoices that these beautiful works are at long last being adequately recorded. But one can't help from regretting that it should be deemed necessary to limit these recordings of Haydn's quartets to a group of subscribers. Music like this is not limited in its appeal and ought to be released in the usual way and made accessible to all. Over a period of months it would quite likely enjoy a sale far in excess of that it enjoyed in subscription form. Let us have societies by all means, but let them be devoted to music that could not be expected to be recorded in any other manner, esoteric music that experts, while admitting its lack of popular appeal, deem of sufficient worth and interest to be recorded. That, after all, is the only conceivable excuse for a limited edition society in the field of phonograph records, and functioning in that manner it could perform a signal service to musicians and music lovers.

Meanwhile, the fortunate subscribers to the Haydn Quartet Society have one of the most charming albums of the year with which to adorn their shelves. As in the other society albums, seven records and a booklet comprise the contents of the first Haydn album. The booklet is written by Cecil Gray, whose recently issued critical study of Sibelius and "Survey of Contemporary Music" will be favorably remembered. Mr. Gray's well written notes on the Haydn quartets are excellently done and make a fine introduction to the records themselves. He points out the changing view of Haydn, from one that saw him primarily as a distinguished and valuable forerunner of Mozart to one—now widely held—that recognizes his independent greatness. (This view, incidentally, would not seem to be in accordance with the policy of restricting the distribution of these records.) Mr. Gray thinks that Haydn was not only the "father" of the string quartet, but that, having

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\* A pretty bad guess; see page 405.



created the form and medium single-handed, he himself "completely exploited its possibilities" and wrote quartets that have never been surpassed.



The three quartets included in the first album are all delightful. The one in C Major, Op. 20, No. 2, as Mr. Gray points out, represents a marked gain over his previous works in this form in that the writing is much more evenly distributed among the four instruments than it is in the earlier quartets, which could be described as "first violin" quartets, the other three instruments merely supplying an accompaniment to the first fiddle. Another notable feature of this Quartet is that the final movement is in fugal form. It is, all in all, a delightfully vivacious work, and listening to it one has a hard time to keep from succumbing to indignation that, since the Quartet is included in a limited edition album, it might be thought to contain music that is unusually formidable. Op. 33, No. 3, also in C Major, came some ten years after Op. 20, No. 2. Sometimes known as the *Bird* Quartet, it now and then, though never obviously, suggests bird calls, but these would be hardly noticed were it not for its title. The minuet movement, here marked "scherzando," is curiously restrained in character, which is somewhat uncommon in Haydn, who usually was in the custom of letting himself go without restraint in his lively movements. The effective pianissimo ending in the Rondo of this Quartet is perfectly realized by the recorders and the artists. Op. 77, No. 1, in G Major, in its original form was written as a sonata for piano and violin (or flute). But there are no indications of this in its quartet form, for it is a remarkably smooth and effective piece of string quartet writing.

The beautifully poised interpretations of these works by the Pro Arte String Quartet are a pleasure to listen to, and the recorders have done them ample justice in the transference of the music to the discs. These society albums show that when it is necessary the recorders can perform their duties with amazing competence; let these records be an example to all recording engineers. And if necessary, let us have fewer recordings, but let them strive to equal the high standard set in this album.

## PIANO



**MENDELSSOHN**

C-2711D

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS: Op. 30, No. 6, in *F Sharp Minor*; Op. 38, No. 2, in *C Minor*. Two sides. Ignaz Friedman (Piano). One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Apparently the same plan is being followed with the *Songs Without Words* set as is being employed in the *Frauenliebe und Leben* set: that is, the release of a record a month from each group. Collectors will endorse the price classification given the Mendelssohn pieces; at 75c these little piano discs ought to enjoy considerable popularity. The music is graceful and attractive, the playing competent, and the recording excellent. It is to be hoped that Columbia's fine work in making available good records at moderate prices will receive the generous support it deserves.

**LISZT**

V-7325

to

V-7327

SONATA IN B MINOR. Six sides. Alfred Cortot (Piano).  
Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-93. \$6.50.

This Sonata is now nearly eighty years old and shows it. Its brilliance and thunder sound today somewhat faded and empty. What must once have seemed rich and highly seasoned now simpers and leers, though it must be said that Cortot's admirable playing invests the work with a bounce and poetry that would be missing in a less skilful interpretation. Dedicated to Robert Schumann, the work has been the subject of a brisk controversy, some objecting to its title of sonata, claiming that actually there are but few traces of the form in the work; others, seeing in it an organic amplification of the old, obsolete form, maintain that Liszt merely used Beethoven's last sonata period as a starting point and built upon that foundation. With the arrival of the chorale, Liszt states his religious beliefs, blending, as Huneker once observed, "piety and passion in the most mystically amorous fashion . . . the rustle of silken attire is back of every bar; sensuous imagery, a faint perfume of femininity lurks in each cadence and trill. Ah! naughty Abbé have a care. After all thy tonsures and chorales, thy credos and sackcloth, wilt thou admit the Evil One in the guise of melody, in whose chromatic intervals lie dimpled cheek and sunny tress! Wilt thou allow her to make away with spiritual resolutions! Vade, retro me Sathanas! And behold it is accomplished. The bold theme so eloquently proclaimed at the outset is solemnly sounded with choric pomp and power. Then the hue and cry of diminished sevenths begins, and this tonal panorama with its swirl of intoxicating colors moves kaleidoscopically onward. Again the devil tempts the musical St. Anthony, this time in octaves and in A major; he momentarily succumbs, but that good old family chorale is repeated, and even if its orthodoxy is faulty in spots it serves its purpose; the Evil One is routed and early piety breaks forth in an alarming fugue which, like that domestic ailment, is happily short-winded."

Even if the music doesn't tempt you, Cortot's fine interpretation is worth hearing. The recording is good.

**BEETHOVEN**

B-85015

and

B-85016

SONATA IN C SHARP MINOR ("*Moonlight*"), Op. 27, No.  
2. Four sides. Wilhem Kempff (Piano).  
Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Led by Arthur Schnabel's recordings for the Beethoven Piano Sonata Society, Beethoven's piano music is occupying a conspicuous place on the lists these days. Kempff is a familiar name to the collector of piano records, and his Beethoven discs have an honorable place in the catalogue. Several years ago, when piano recording was far from the satisfactory condition in which it is today, Kempff's discs ranked with Brailowsky's as being outstandingly good and far in advance of the average piano recording. Kempff recorded the *Moonlight* Sonata during that period, and that recording occupied the four sides of two 12-inch discs. Now, recording the Sonata again, he gets it on the four sides of two 10-inch discs. The *Moonlight*, due in large part no doubt to its fetching title, has always been tremendously popu-



lar, and if you are contemplating adding a new recording of the work to your collection, this version by Kempff, played with the proper poetry and vigor and capitably recorded, warrants your attention.



**ROUSSEL  
DUKAS**  
V-L909  
IMPORTED

SICILIENNE DE LA SUITE POUR PIANO, Op. 14. (A. Roussel) One side and  
LA PLAINTÉ AU LOIN DU FAUNE (*Piece écrite pour le "Tombeau de Debussy"*). (P. Dukas) One side. M. Lazare-Levy (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

The Roussel selection is notable mainly for its clarity and simplicity, and all in all it is an effective little piano piece. *La Plainte au loin du faune* is a poetic piece, interweaving phrases from Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* with pleasing effect. Lazare-Levy plays both selections acceptably, and the recording is good.

## OPERA



**KERN**  
B-20114  
to  
B-20117

SHOW BOAT: *Abridged*. (Oscar Hammerstein 2nd-Jerome Kern) Eight sides. Paul Robeson (Baritone), Helen Morgan (Soprano), James Melton (Tenor), Frank Munn (Tenor), Olga Albani (Soprano), Louis Alter (Piano), and Brunswick Concert Orchestra and "Show Boat" Chorus conducted by Victor Young. Four 12-inch discs in album. \$5.

The amazing thing is that more enterprises of this sort are not undertaken. Providing the material is good and the arrangements effective, such albums are bound to be entertaining, and it would seem that the better musical comedies and light operas offer an especially rich field for the recorders to explore. Polydor has already given us Strauss' *Fledermaus* and Kálmán's *Gypsy Princess* in abridged form; Victor, in addition to its albums of selections by Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml and Stephen Foster, has issued on its export list abridged operettas by Oscar Strauss and Franz Lehár and several Spanish zarzuelas. But that is about the limit of the list of such recordings. It is to be hoped that some attention will be devoted to this field. Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing* suggests itself as an admirable candidate for abridged treatment.

Brunswick has here grouped together the outstanding musical numbers from Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* and issued them in an album. Its recent revival in New York proved that the charm and appeal of *Show Boat* are considerably better grounded and more permanent than those of most of our musical shows, and therefore an album of excerpts done by a competent group of artists, some of them members of the original cast, comes at an appropriate time. Not everyone can see the operetta, and the previously issued records have only hinted at the qualities that made it such an outstanding success.



In between an Overture and a Finale are *Ol' Man River*, *Bill*, *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man*, *You Are Love*, *Make Believe* and *Why Do I Love You?* The high points of the album are contained in the first two records and in the second side of the last disc. Side one contains the Overture, consisting of snatches of the principal tunes effectively strung together and finely played by the Brunswick Concert Orchestra. Side two contains *Ol' Man River* sung by Paul Robeson, who has hitherto appeared on Victor and H. M. V. records. So much has been written of Robeson's stirring rendition of this haunting tune that it would be superfluous to add anything here. Suffice it to say that he is in excellent voice and is provided with a fine accompaniment and splendid recording. The second record sets forth *Bill* on one side and *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* on the other, both sung by Helen Morgan with orchestral and piano accompaniment. This is a charming record. Less characteristic and rather colorless is the following disc on which James Melton sings *You Are Love* and *Make Believe*. These are pleasant tunes but lack the distinguishing qualities of *Ol' Man River*. The final record contains *Why Do I Love You?* and the Finale. The former, sung by Countess Olga Albani and Frank Munn, is mildly attractive, but neither the music nor the performance is outstanding. On the same high plane as the first two records is the Finale, in which *Ol' Man River* appears again and is impressively sung by Paul Robeson and a chorus.

The whole set was arranged, orchestrated and directed by Victor Young, who has performed his various duties with obvious skill and taste. His orchestral accompaniments are a feature of each song. The recording throughout is superb. The album did not accompany the review copies, but we are told that it is decorated with photographs and autographs of the artists, which appears to be an excellent idea. The set seems likely to enjoy a widespread popularity.

**VERDI  
WAGNER**  
V-7605

{ TRAVIATA: *Di Provenza il mar*. (Verdi) One side and  
TANNHÄUSER: *O du mein holden Abendstern*. (Wagner)  
One side. John Charles Thomas (Baritone) with orchestra.  
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Turning from *Ol' Man River* and *Sylvia*, John Charles Thomas now tackles grand opera, with satisfactory, if not impressive, results. In both the Verdi and Wagner pieces he gives good, straightforward interpretations, singing with a restraint that one would not have expected from some of his earlier records. The disc is addressed principally to Mr. Thomas' admirers; it is hardly likely that there can be much of a demand for the *Evening Star* among the general public at this late date. Recording and orchestral accompaniments are beautifully done.

**MOUSSORG-  
SKY**  
C-50341D

{ BORIS GODOUNOV: *Prologue*. Two sides. M. Cambon (Baritone), M. Dallerand (Bass) with Chorus of the Paris Opera and Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

*Boris Godounov* has still to be recorded in full, and the collector anxious to pick up some representative excerpts from the work must dig pretty thoroughly into the catalogues in order to emerge with anything of much consequence. Without an album setting forth the work in complete or approximately complete



form, one must perforce rely upon the excerpts, and these are neither numerous nor outstanding. One can think of few great works that have been more neglected than Moussorgsky's famous opera. This recording of the Prologue is well worth the price asked. The two soloists are adequate, the chorus is good, and the recording and orchestral accompaniments are satisfactory. One again Columbia earns praise for putting out records of fine music in the less expensive series.



## CHORAL



**BACH**

V-11285

to

V-11296

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW. Twenty-four sides. Choir of St. Bartholomew's Church, New York, under the direction of David McK. Williams. Recorded in St. Bartholomew's Church. Twelve 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-138. \$18.

Looked upon as the world's supreme tragedy, the story of the betrayal, the trial, the condemnation and death of Jesus Christ has been recited dramatically or re-enacted symbolically from the time when followers of the central figure of that tragedy first began to assemble together. Varying as to details, each one of the four canonical Christian Gospels naturally contains an extended account of the last days on earth of the subject of these biographies. The events of these days as they affected the subject are known technically as the "Passion," from the passive Latin verb *pator* (past participle *passus*), meaning "to bear," in the sense of enduring or suffering.

In all Christian liturgies, an important feature of the Holy Week ceremonies from Palm Sunday to Good Friday has been the rehearsal of the story of the Passion of the Lord as related by the four Evangelists. The position occupied by the recital of the Passion was that of the Gospel of the day at the Mass. This was accomplished more or less dramatically by having several ecclesiastics take part, which was not done otherwise. The whole thing was intoned to a simple syllabic type of Plainchant, with more elaborate cadences for the cry of Christ from the cross. One cleric declaimed the narrative of the Evangelist, another the words of Christ, still another the words of certain individuals, such as Peter, Pilate, etc., while a small group interjected the shouts of the mob and the remarks of disciples and priests.

Such was the liturgical background from which evolved the German Passion oratorio of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was dramatic to the degree indicated above, but not in the sense in which the Passion play, one of the many ecclesiastical dramas of the Middle Ages, was dramatic. So it is to the Holy Week liturgies we must go, rather than to the Passion plays, for the antecedents of the Passion oratorio. In spite of the tremendous upheaval of the Reformation, the Passion continued to be recited in Germany by the followers of Luther. In the sixteenth century, Johann Walther and Bartholomäus Gesse had made settings

# BRUNSWICK RECORD CORPORATION

Presents the Musical Romance

## SHOW BOAT

Words by  
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, 2nd

Music by  
JEROME KERN

Record No.			
20114	{	OVERTURE	{ Brunswick Concert Orchestra Victor Young, Conductor
	{	OL' MAN RIVER	{ Paul Robeson Baritone with Orchestra
20115	{	BILL (Lyric by P. G. Wodehouse) Soprano with Orchestra	{ Helen Morgan Piano by Louis Alter
	{	CAN'T HELP LOVIN' DAT MAN Soprano with Orchestra	{ Helen Morgan Piano by Louis Alter
20116	{	YOU ARE LOVE	{ James Melton Tenor with Orchestra
	{	MAKE BELIEVE	{ James Melton Tenor with Orchestra
20117	{	WHY DO I LOVE YOU?	{ Countess Olga Albani and Frank Munn Soprano and Tenor with Orchestra
	{	FINALE	{ Brunswick Concert Orchestra with "Show Boat" Chorus

"Show Boat", one of the most popular operettas of modern days, is presented with a cast of internationally famous artists, some of whom were featured in the original Ziegfeld production and in the revival now on Broadway. These four records are available in an attractive colored album done in the spirit of "Show Boat", with photographs and autographs.

The entire Brunswick production was arranged, orchestrated and directed by Victor Young.

We sincerely believe that from the standpoints of musical quality, beauty, and general interest, this is the most attractive set of phonograph records that has ever been issued.

We recommend the Brunswick production of "Show Boat" unreservedly to lovers of all kinds of music.

# *Brunswick Records*

BRUNSWICK RECORD CORPORATION

1776 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

BRANCHES AND DISTRIBUTORS IN PRINCIPAL CITIES



of it, utilizing the method, and to a certain extent the material, of the traditional Plainsong rendition, but extending the use of the chorus. Finally Heinrich Schütz, in the seventeenth century, wrote four settings of the Passion in which he combined the Italian style in the recitatives with the German chorale in the choruses.



With Bach the form of the Passion oratorio had its culmination. He wrote five Passions, but only two—those according to St. John and St. Matthew—have survived. In 1723 when Bach went to Leipzig as Cantor, he found that the long continued precedent of singing the Passion in the two old Plainsong settings had been broken two years before when an oratorio version by his predecessor, Kuhnau, had been given. In the very year of his appointment, Bach's setting of the Passion According to St. John was sung in Leipzig. The Passion According to St. Matthew followed in 1729, and had its first production in St. Thomas's Church on Good Friday, April 15, of that year. By this time the form of the Passion oratorio had been greatly influenced by German pietism. The subjective element in the form of hymns and individual comments on the action had assumed an equal importance with the objective recital of the Gospel narrative. This greatly appealed to Bach's deeply religious nature. It is therefore in a measure understandable how unparalleled musical genius combined with fervent religious temperament could give to the world the towering religious and musical masterpiece we have in the Passion according to St. Matthew.

The Biblical text forming the thread of the narrative is found in St. Matthew 26 and 27; the poetical commentary is by Christian Friedrich Henrici, known under his pen name of Picander; the text thus formed is interspersed with appropriate German hymns. Musically the narrative of the Evangelist is sung in expressive recitative by a tenor; the words of Jesus, Peter, the High Priest, and Pilate, likewise in recitative, by a bass, while the words of Jews and disciples are given to choruses. The comment upon the events told in the narrative is made in the form of arias and choruses, with the hymns set to glorious chorale melodies superbly harmonized by Bach. Altogether there are seventy-eight numbers in the work, divided into two parts, each of which is preceded by a Prologue. In his music Bach has made abundant use of the *leit-motiv*, but in a pictorial way, and not in the highly developed and subtle psychological manner made famous by Wagner a century or more later.

There is no indication on the labels as to what parts of the work are recorded. It develops that thirty-six of the seventy-eight numbers are recorded complete, together with parts of seven other numbers. This is a fair share of the entire work which is generally trimmed to similar proportions in actual performances. It seems that there are no traditional "cuts" for the St. Matthew Passion as for certain oratorios. The "cuts" depend in a measure on whether the conductor happens to lean to the dramatic or contemplative elements of the work. Here there seems to be an inclination toward the latter. The chorale melody by Hassler associated with Gerhardt's hymn "*O Haupt Voll Blut Mich Verlangen*" occurs five times and is recorded five times. The Novello edition of the score is used, with the exception of one chorale, for which more familiar words are substituted.

The score as left by Bach requires two choirs, two orchestras, soloists, organ, and continuo. The organ does duty for all the instruments in this recording.

—New Issues—

# Columbia Masterworks\*

## **RAVEL: CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA.**

The Columbia Masterworks Album issue this month is the first recording of the eagerly awaited Piano Concerto of Ravel. The solo part is taken by Mme. Marguerite Long to whom the work was dedicated and the orchestra is conducted by the composer. This work has excited tremendous interest both here and abroad. The famous French critic, Emile Vuillermoz, in writing of it says: "Ravel's Concerto is a piece of orchestral and pianistic fireworks, a scintillation of musical spangles, a sheaf of sparkling sounds." Everything points to a record popularity for this set.



### MASTERWORKS SET No. 176

*Ravel: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Marguerite Long with Symphony Orchestra conducted by the Composer. In Five Parts, on Three Twelve-Inch Records. \$6.00 with Album.*

**HAYDN: SYMPHONY IN G MAJOR.** It is fitting that before the year closes in which the two hundredth anniversary of his birth was celebrated, one of Haydn's symphonies should be issued by Columbia. The short and unfamiliar work in G Major presented on Masterworks Records Nos. 68067-D and 68068-D, is, in spite of its brevity, one of the most characteristic of Haydn's orchestral writings, and musically is one of the loveliest. M. Hermann Closson, Librarian of the Brussels Royal Conservatory, in a note concerning this recording, says: "There have been uttered occasionally certain doubts as to the authenticity of this work. However, the fact that it figures in so many (Haydn) catalogues, its style so Haydnesque, so joyous and so pure, militate greatly in favor of its authenticity."

*Haydn: Symphony in G Major. Désiré Defauw and Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra. In Four Parts, on Two Twelve-Inch Records. \$1.50 Each.*

**WEBER: EURYANTHE: OVERTURE.** Weber's Euryanthe overture remains one of the composer's most brilliant conceptions, and has aroused enthusiasm at every hearing since its original performance in Vienna in 1823. The impetuous introduction with its crashing chords and drum-beats leads to more eloquent and tender passages as the various themes of the opera are treated in synopsis. It is beautiful music, beautifully played; Mr. Mengelberg and his great orchestra maintain throughout their fine reputation.

*Weber: Euryanthe: Overture. Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. In Two Parts, on One Twelve-Inch Record, 68069-D. \$2.00.*



"Magic Notes"

\*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

**Columbia** "NEW  
PROCESS" **Records**  
Viva-tonal Recording - The Records without Scratch

Columbia Phonograph Co., Inc., New York City



"Magic Notes"



Dr. Williams uses extremely effective registration thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of the score, and the organ is nicely adjusted to the voices so that both show to advantage. It is a beautiful performance except for some little deviation from pitch by the sopranos and about two spots where the tone sounds "hooty." There is a noticeable tendency of the basses to overbalance the other parts. The soloists are superb, especially the soprano and the nobly virile tenor. The recording is admirable.



HERBERT BOYCE SATCHER

## VOCAL



**PROCH**  
**SAINT-SAËNS**  
C-G4074M

AIR AND VARIATIONS. (Proch) One side and  
PARYSATIS: *Le rossignol et la rose*. (Saint-Saëns) One side.  
Lily Pons (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by G. Cloëz.  
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**SCHUMANN**  
C-G4071M

FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN: (a) *Du Ring an meinem Finger*; (b) *Ich kann's nicht fassen*. Two sides. Lotte Lehmann (Soprano) with accompaniments conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Those who want a dazzling display of vocal brilliance and virtuosity can find these qualities in abundance in the Lily Pons disc, a repressing of a French Odeon record. This artist's remarkably clear and agile voice has been heard on records before, and those to whom this type of singing appeals will want this well recorded disc. . . . More substantial music is contained on the two sides of the *Frauenliebe und Leben* record, which is beautifully sung by Lotte Lehmann. Last month Columbia gave us another of the four discs that comprise the cycle, and it is to be hoped that in the coming months the remaining two records will be issued, thus completing the set. The subdued accompaniments, conducted by Dr. Weissmann, are inoffensive, and the recording is adequate.

**LULLI**  
**MARTINI**  
V-DB1625  
IMPORTED

AU CLAIR DE LA LUNE. (Lulli; harmonized by De La Tombelle) One side and  
PLAISIR D'AMOUR. (Martini) One side. Yvonne Printemps (Soprano) with harpsichord accompaniments by Madame Peltier. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

At the risk of seeming to slight Yvonne Printemps' fine soprano voice, I shall say that the primary appeal of this record is in the cool and chaste tinkling of its harpsichord accompaniments. The songs, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively, make appropriate subjects for the use of that instrument, although one might regret that less known and recorded pieces were not chosen.—

## New Victor Releases

# Musical Masterpiece Series

*The Passion of Our Lord According to St. Matthew* (Bach). Performed by the Choir of St. Bartholomew's Church, of New York, on twelve double-faced 12-inch Victor Records Nos. 11285-11296 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 11297-11308. Also available on Long-Playing Records Nos. L-11627-L-11632. In album M-138 with text. List price, \$18.00.

This music was composed for the Good Friday service at St. Thomas' Church in Leipzig over two hundred years ago. A century later Mendelssohn performed it in Berlin, and since that time it has been given at concerts of a secular nature. The recorded performance of the Choir of St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City is one that will greatly enrich your record collection. The soloists, all well-known artists, the choruses of voices excellently blended, under the direction of David McK. Williams, present the work with all the depth of feeling that the subject inspires. If you are a Bach enthusiast, here is an album that you will certainly want to own.

### *Sonata in B Minor* (Franz Liszt).

Played by Alfred Cortot on three double-faced 12-inch Victor Records Nos. 7325-7327 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 7328-7330. In album M-93 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

The all too-seldom played B Minor Sonata of Liszt will find immediate favor with the piano-minded music lover. Luscious melodies . . . cadenzas typical of the composer are played by Alfred Cortot with the facility for which this artist is noted. Add this album to your library. You will find the music exceptionally entertaining.

## RED SEAL RECORDS

*Symphonic Waltz* (Parts 1 and 2) (Stock). Played by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Orchestra on Victor Record No. 7387. List price, \$2.00.

companionment by John Charles Thomas on Victor Record No. 7605. List price, \$2.00.

*Traviata—Di Provenza il mar and Tannhäuser — O du mein holder Abendstern.* Sung with orchestral ac-

*Sérénade Melancolique* (Parts 1 and 2) (Tschaikowsky). Played with orchestral accompaniment by Mischa Elman on Victor Record No. 7744. List price, \$2.00.



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Camden, New Jersey

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But they *are* both lovely old songs. And if Miss Printemps had left out an emotional sob near the end of *Plaisir d'Amour*, her renditions would have been about perfect.



This is almost the first record from the French artist since the album of excerpts from the repertoire of herself and her husband, which Victor released a few years back. Its unusual nature outweighs its demerits, and it is to be recommended to the collector who is looking for something a bit out of the ordinary, which is done with taste and charm.

R. W. S.

**MENDELSSOHN  
ARDITI**  
C-50340D

{ ON WINGS OF SONG. (Mendelssohn) One side and  
DREAM OF HOME. (Arditi) One side. Isobel Baillie (Soprano) with accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Mendelssohn has an accompaniment consisting of a 'cello, an organ and a harp, while Arditi's *Il Bacio* is supplied with an orchestral background. The singing is pleasant and the recording good.

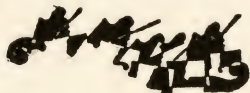
## VIOLIN



**TSCHAIKOWSKY**  
V-7744

{ SÉRÉNADE MÉLANCOLIQUE, Op. 26. Two sides. Mischa Elman (Violin) with Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The information on the label indicates the character of this record so well that further comment would seem almost superfluous. The music is one of those long-drawn, lugubrious sighs that make Tschaikowsky so attractive to some and so repellent to others. Mischa Elman plays it beautifully, and the recording is remarkably successful in giving a faithful reproduction of the fat, rich, glowing tone that he draws from his violin. The Victor Symphony Orchestra under Shilkret supplies a subdued accompaniment. If Tschaikowsky's mournful moods agree with you, then here is a superbly played and magnificently recorded disc that belongs in your collection. Otherwise the record is chiefly interesting because of the fine violin recording.



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# CORRESPONDENCE



## But We Like the Set

Editor, *Disques*:

I have just received and played the records in the first album issued by the Haydn Quartet Society, and I am registering my disappointment long and loudly in the hope of encouraging you to take the matter up in print yourself.

The offerings seem to me well-chosen samples from a mine of lovely music, well but not superlatively recorded—but the performance!! As a wise critic of music has said: "A string quartet must be very good or it is no good at all." Where in these records is that singing tone, or that buoyancy of tempo, that give zest and life to a good quartet and make its performances one of the high points of all music? With such quartets as the Léner, the London, and the New York recording, why must subscribers be asked to accept such hack work as this?

My greatest regret is not for my wasted fourteen dollars, though that is real money these days to most of us, but for the blow this fizzle is going to give the movement for extending the range of good recorded music by subscription. Let us hope the Beethoven Sonata and Sibelius organizations keep better faith with those who have contributed to them.

Disgustedly yours,

JOHN R. STOLTZE

St. Paul, Minn.

## Proposes a Mahler Society

Editor, *Disques*:

I noticed about a week or so ago that the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Bruno Walter, will give Mahler's Second Symphony this coming February. I believe that all music lovers should unite in an effort to get the Victor Company to record this performance, the same as they did with Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* last winter. I have already written the Victor Company direct, but through the pages of your magazine you should be able to secure a great many more votes in support of such a recording. Undoubtedly the Victor Company, if it was assured of enough support for such a recording, could arrange to make it. In England, the editor of *The Gramophone*, took an active

part in the formation of such societies as the Beethoven Sonata, Sibelius, etc. Perhaps your magazine could take the lead in the formation of a Mahler Society, with its first aim the recording of this performance. It would reflect artistic credit to America, if such a society were initiated here.

Putting aside the controversial nature of Mahler's works, it seems that everyone would welcome the first electrical recording of a symphony by this (in my opinion) great composer, in order to be able to hear more often, and thus better judge his work. The Second Symphony would be an excellent one to start with in Mahler's cycle of nine. It is extremely unlikely because of the orchestral and vocal resources called for that this symphony would be performed especially for recording purposes, and advantage should be taken of this opportunity next winter to add this Symphony to the library of recorded music.

D. J. STONE

Columbus, Ohio

## Early Polydor Recordings

Editor, *Disques*:

In your last issue it is stated that Schnabel's recording of Beethoven's First Piano Concerto is the first recording of the work. But in a 1927 Polydor catalogue I find a recording of the Concerto by Wilhelm Kempff and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. Whether it is electrical or not I do not know; it is not listed in later Polydor catalogues. The 1927 Polydor catalogue, incidentally, is full of astonishing things. I was surprised to find in it recordings of Strauss' *Zarathustra* and *Alpine* Symphony, two Bruckner symphonies, and Mahler's Second Symphony. And the catalogue dates back five years!

T. CARLSON

San Francisco, Calif.

## Corrections

In the last issue, page 336, the H. M. V. recording of Beethoven's First Piano Concerto was listed at \$14. The price is \$10. On page 355 the Gregorian Chant record (V-V6199) is of course 75c and not \$75, as listed. Finally, the Lotte Lehmann record reviewed on page 357 (C-G4070M) is \$1.25 and not \$1.50.

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# NEW MUSIC

LE CIRQUE: *Suite for Piano*. By J. Turina. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Schott Edition). \$1.25.

Joaquin Turina is at his best as a miniaturist and this *Suite* is no exception to the rule. The music, descriptive of a circus, is bright, scintillating and full of humor, achieving its effect with the simplest of means. The six numbers comprising the *Suite* are: (1) *Fanfare*; (2) *Jongleurs*; (3) *Ecuyère*; (4) *Le chien savan*; (5) *Clown*; (6) *Trapezes volants*.

RADIO MADRID: *Suite for Piano*. By Joaquin Turina. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Ed. Schott). \$1.25.

This latest piano opus of Turina consists of a prologue: *Devant de Microphone, Les diseurs au Radio*, and three "transmissions"; (1) *Les étudiants de Santiago*; (2) *Route à travers la Castille*; (3) *Fêtes à Séville*. As can be seen by the titles, the music is humorous in quality, but the effects are produced without recourse to atonality or polytonality and although the technical demands on the part of the performer are slight, the music always sounds delightfully pianistic and brilliant. In articles and books on Spanish music, Turina's name is always coupled with Falla's, Nin's and other celebrities of the Spanish school, but it is hard to evaluate exactly the importance of his contribution to that school. One thing is certain, though: he is much more than a mere "Spanish Chamade" in spite of the light character of much of his music. There are few composers who are able to create brilliant effects with such simple means.

SONATA *for Piano*. By Roger Sessions. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Ed. Schott). \$2.50.

This Sonata ought to gladden the hearts of all American musical chauvinists, as it will stand comparison with any products in this form of any European contemporary school. It consists of one movement and is not too

thickly overburdened with too many themes and too much polyphony, but every note counts in its scheme of things. The Sonata begins with a long lyrical theme of twenty-six measures which leads straight to a rough, rhythmic allegro theme and both are skilfully developed to the end. The clever manipulation of the thematic material and the smooth, spontaneous flow of the music demonstrate a master craftsman.

KONTRASTE, Op. 16. By N. Lopatnikoff. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Ed. Schott). \$1.75.

Each of the five little pieces is of a different character and serves as a contrast to the preceding and following numbers, but they are all written in the grotesque, ultra-modern idiom and distinguished by Mozartean clearness and tonal sensitiveness.

FAIRY TALES, Op. 51. By N. Medtner. Leipzig: *Zimmermann Ed.* \$1 each.

These six "fairy tales" are dedicated to the Russian legendary character, "Ivan the Fool," and are among the loveliest of Medtner's works. The Russian folk-idiom is imitated throughout in a remarkable manner and the feeling of a tale being told is never absent from any of the pieces. The wealth of interesting technical and harmonic details and the structural unity of his works stamp Medtner as one of the greatest masters of form of all times.

UNGARISCHE VOLKSLIEDER *for Violin and Piano*, Op. 16. By Paul Kadosa. New York: *Associated Music Publishers, Inc.* (Schott Edition). \$1.

A collection of several Hungarian folk-songs cleverly harmonized and developed in modern fashion à la Bela Bartók. Kadosa's modernistic treatment of the melodies somehow does not seem to disfigure or distort them but rather accentuates their rhythmic peculiarities and vigor.

MAURICE B. KATZ



## BOOKS

MEMOIRS OF HECTOR BERLIOZ: *from 1803 to 1865 comprising his travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England.* Edited by Ernest Newman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$5.

Berlioz' achievements as a composer are still the subject of a brisk controversy, freshly opened whenever one of his major works is given place on a program, and his position in musical history has by no means been so definitely settled as have those of some of his contemporaries such as Liszt, Wagner, Schumann and Chopin. But Berlioz was more than a fine musician; he was also a fine writer on musical subjects, and the high place accorded his literary achievements is accepted by even those who dislike his music. Writing came hard to Berlioz, much harder than composing music, and in the *Memoirs* he frequently complains of the dismal fate that compels him to write feuilletons, for which, apparently, he held slight regard. Nevertheless, something made him labor long and painfully over these despised feuilletons, and they form some of the most brilliant and entertaining articles on music ever published. The difficulty with which he wrote was never visible in the finished product, save perhaps in the sense that so glittering and sparkling a style could only result from immense pains and diligent re-writing. Berlioz' writings are never dull or stilted; even the most trivial passages are always interesting, and not infrequently there are passages that are brilliant and amusing in the extreme.

It is therefore excellent news that the *Memoirs*, capably edited and annotated by Ernest Newman, can now be had in an attractive new edition. Some years ago, when Alfred A. Knopf, the publisher, suggested to Ernest Newman that he write a new life of Berlioz, the critic replied that there was no necessity for such a work, since Berlioz himself, in his autobiography, had already supplied the need more satisfactorily than anyone else could ever hope to do. What was needed, Mr. Newman contended, was merely a re-issue of the *Memoirs*, with the gaps filled in, a few dates supplied, and the occasional errors corrected. That, in brief, is what the new edition of the *Memoirs* gives us.

The translation used is based on that of the Misses Holmes which appeared in 1884, but nearly every paragraph, Mr. Newman

says, had to be drastically revised. As it now stands, at any rate, it is an admirable translation, giving the reader a vivid idea of Berlioz' extraordinarily pungent and forceful style. There are three sets of footnotes, properly indicated: those by Berlioz himself, those by the Misses Holmes, and those by Mr. Newman. Mr. Newman's notes are well chosen and informative; they are not sufficiently numerous to halt the progress of the book, yet they manage to keep the thread of the story clear when Berlioz jumps the track, as he frequently does in the *Memoirs*. Berlioz' memory was sometimes confused, and in consequence his chronology and facts are often misleading and in error. The necessary corrections, sometimes completely destroying the effect of Berlioz' story, are made by Mr. Newman. Berlioz' fondness for dominating a situation now and then caused him to write down things that were plainly untrue (one such incident can be found on page 152, where Berlioz himself, in a footnote, corrects a statement in the text and speaks of the "tendency which artists always have to write for effect") and that sometimes made him seem noble and generous and his enemies, by comparison, mean and despicable. Sometimes, of course, this was so, but not always, and Mr. Newman's judicious corrections thus serve admirably to give us a clearer, more accurate view of the composer.

Begun early in 1848 with the purpose of correcting the various misstatements about him that had somehow gotten in print, the *Memoirs*, as Mr. Newman points out, are more a compilation than a work planned to narrate the subject's life in full. A great deal of material that had previously been published is included in the *Memoirs*, but the whole thing hangs together very well, and the result is literature of a high order. Writing so lively and arresting as this is not often encountered in the literature relating to music.

GRAMOPHONES: *Acoustic and Radio.* Compiled by G. Wilson. London: Gramophone (Publications) Ltd. 1s. 2d.

This is an excellent little handbook made up largely of articles that have appeared in *The Gramophone*. There are chapters on machines, needles, records and various other subjects of interest and importance to the record collector.





